



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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Cultivating Spiritual Vitality

The subject of cultivating Christian vitality is a blessing for me. I would like to approach this subject using an expository method rather than a point by point method. 1 Peter 1:3 tells us that we have a “lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” If we have experienced that in our lives we know what it is to have a hope that is swelling and bursting with vitality and life.

Read 1 Peter 2:1–25. Why did I choose this portion of Scripture? The primary focus of chapter 1 is salvation. We can read about the source, blessings and the trials of salvation. We can read about the excitement of angels and the Old Testament prophets over this salvation that was to come. 1 Peter 1:23 speaks about the new birth. It goes without saying that before someone can run well, they have to be

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born well. Thus, it is very important to understand that we are born again.

What are some important things for us to remember after we are born again and know what salvation is? 1 Peter 2 tells us some things which we must remember if we would cultivate spiritual vitality. It is a marvelous passage of Scripture. The comments that I offer will merely scrape, or barely touch, the surface of this beautiful portion

of Scripture.

Peter says we have been born again. In chapter 2, he begins by saying there are some things which the new born believer must shed or must strip off. These are things that need to be laid aside like a filthy garment. We must distance ourselves from some things, and he names them. One brother stated, "It is delightful to see when a person who has found the Lord, and has truly found Jesus precious in his life,

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that we do not have to beg or nag them to give things up and to quit the sinning business.” They want to do that instinctively. Peter encourages the believer to lay these things aside.

This harmonizes with Paul’s teaching in Ephesians 4. There are some garments that we put off and some that we put on. Here are some things that we are to put off. “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings.” (verse 1) We are to put off:

malice — (which is a broad term of wickedness),

guile — (a deceitfulness or craftiness),

hypocrisies (would be hiding behind a veneer, a facade, insincerity),

envies — (someone has said “envy one of the last sins to die”). Envy raised its head in the apostolic band. There was envy even at the last supper, when the disciples were wrangling and discussing who was to have the greatest honour. I wonder how many church struggles and problems can be traced back to this very thing. Sometimes we blame it on issues. We say that the church is having struggles because of a certain issue that they cannot fully come together on. Sometimes this may be. I

believe very often, and too often, the church struggles because believers have not laid this thing aside.

Along with this as ministering brethren, how many times within the plural ministry can struggles — the gifts that the Lord has blessed our brethren with — become a challenge to us, instead of a blessing to us. We need to be aware of this, and face it. We need to see that the Lord has gifted different men in different ways not to be a challenge to us, but to be a blessing. We must see it as a blessing to the people of God.

Evil speakings — of course medical doctors say that the tongue is attached to the back of the throat, but I believe that the Scripture would say rather, that the tongue is attached to the heart. Jesus seemed to verify that, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (Matthew 12:34) The heart will overflow and we cannot help it. If it is filled with good and gracious things, this is what will come out. Encouragement and blessing will come out. However, if there is resentment, there will be this kind of thing — evil speakings come out and things like that. Peter says no. He says these things need to be laid aside and put off. They need to have a

distance put between like a soiled garment. Paul says that these things grieve the Spirit of God. (Ephesians 4:30)

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” (verse 2) In chapter 1, the Word of God is referred to as the “incorruptible seed” (verse 23). In Chapter 2 the Word of God is referred to as “the sincere milk of the word.” The desire there would be similar to the Hebrew word in Psalm 42:1, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks.” It is a similar word meaning a strong desire. As we are born again, we need to desire, or thirst after, the Word of God — the sincere Word of God. We are nourished by the Word of God.

“If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” It is through verse 3 that we taste the graciousness of God. Through the Word of God we taste the graciousness of the Lord, “O taste and see that the LORD is good.” (Psalm 34:8) We need to desire this Word of God. Several years ago, I was looking through an old *National Geographic*. In that old *National Geographic* there was a foldout picture of an Ethiopian family who was suffering terribly in famine. They were literally skin and bone. We would wonder how there was even a spark of

life within them. Then, the thought occurred to me, how many of us Christians are starving ourselves spiritually from a neglect of the Word of God? If we could see ourselves as God sees us, how nourished, or how built up are we in the things of God. We wonder sometimes where our joy, peace, vitality, and assurance are, and we are literally starving ourselves. I know we are busy people who live in a busy day.

A brother recently shared with me about a brother and a sister within the brotherhood who had spent several years in voluntary service. It was somewhat frustrating to him to come home and get into the work of the Lord. He finds himself doing a juggling act. He wants to be involved in the things of God. He wants to be earnest for the Lord God. He wants to serve the Lord God and be used of God. However, there comes this unhandy distraction of making a living. Thus, he finds himself doing a juggling act. We are very busy people.

The military has a rule that no army is stronger than its supply line. Of course, the opposing army is worried about the other army’s front line, but they are concerned also with the supply line. The enemy focuses on the opposing army’s supply line.

They know if they can disrupt the supply line, the front line will suffer. It is the same way in the Christian experience. Our enemy wants to disrupt the supply line. Our strength and vitality will be found in the Word of God.

Ministering brethren, I would like to share with you especially once you have a few years experience under your belt, it is very possible for you to sit down on a Saturday evening and get your book of outlines out, your "*101 outlines*," and a book of "*2000 illustrations*," place those two books together, and put it together like a piece of art and have a message Sunday Morning. We will not have to apologize and say, "I feel unprepared," because they will know it without us saying it. They will sense that there is not much depth or vitality there. For all of us ministering brethren and young people, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)

I was travelling not so long ago out on the prairie land and there were not many trees. The moisture was not enough to supply or grow big trees. Occasionally we would look out across the prairie land and there would be a winding row of big trees. That row of big trees was following a water course — a

creek or a stream. There was sufficient moisture there. The trees could grow. This world is not conducive to Christian growth. The time, especially the age that we are living in, is not conducive to Christian vitality. Psalm 1 tells us that there is a water source — a water course — where we "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water" (Psalm 1:3) We read of a picture of vitality and growth.

Quoting from a little article, "Do you want to escape the delusions of false doctrine? Read the Truth. Read the Bible. Read it fast. Read a book at a setting. Get its thought. Read it thoroughly. Read it slowly. See the inspired words with their beautiful meaning. Hang the word pictures on the walls of your mind. Read it in the morning, when the mind starts working. Read it in the evening, when the mind starts resting. Read it forward as a developing story. Read it backwards as a prophecy fulfillment. Read it in spots. It yet makes sense. Read it for pleasure. Read it as a duty, if need be. Read it as indeed the Word of an almighty God. Read it as written by men such as Moses and Paul. Read its poetry, Read its prose. Read it to fill the mind. Read it to stir the emotions into activity. Read it to move the will to deci-

sion. Read it to guide your life into virtue. Read it to keep you from sin. Read it until your mind and heart are full. Read the Bible. Read the Word of God.”

Our milk cow is sick. I am not a veterinarian, but I do know that one of the symptoms of physical illness is a loss of appetite. I noticed our cow was not eating. This is kind of a dangerous thing because when they do not eat they become weaker. If this does not change, she will become weaker and weaker and she will become susceptible to other things. She will become susceptible to pneumonia. By the same token, one of the first symptoms of spiritual illness could be a lack of appetite for the Word of God.

How do we develop an appetite for the Word? Peter would seem to tell us that the laying aside and putting away these filthy garments in verse 1, would be perhaps a prime condition. These things will spoil the appetite. They are like those little dainties between meals, except they are little poison dainties that spoil the appetite and paralyse our Christian growth. Sometimes we see some little children who are born into the world, it seems, with a bounce. It seems like they come into the world almost running. Then there are others who are sickly and

seem to be anaemic and so on. Would it not be something sometime if we would go to visit a family that had a little, newborn baby and we would pull aside and say, “Oh, such a sweet looking baby,” but we would see something we have never seen before — a grey-headed little baby? This would be unusual, would it not? I believe there are some grey-headed babes in Christ in our midst that ought not to be. They are immature. They are babies.

What are some characteristics of babies? They take a lot of time. They have not developed. They are not very useful, to put it bluntly. They are nice. They are cute. They have to be handled carefully. Our growth in grace and in the things of God sometimes takes time. We sing the song sometimes, “Take time to be Holy. Speak oft with Thy Lord.” Growth in grace, holiness, vitality, and depth takes time. If we want to grow again, our growth and vitality will be in proportion to our feeding, meditating, and our submission to the Word of God.

In verses 2 and 3, Peter expresses an appreciation for the Word of God. Then he begins expressing appreciation for the Son of God. In chapter 1:19, he speaks of Christ as a spotless

lamb. In 2:4, He is referred to as a “living stone.” He is the One who is risen from the dead. He is a living stone. Recently, we heard a sermon at home about “Jesus the One Who Has Abolished Death.” Jesus brought life and immortality through the Gospel. He is a living stone. He rose from the dead. In 2:6 we see Jesus referred to as a chief cornerstone, in 2:7, a “precious” stone. By the way, “precious” is one of Peter’s favourite adjectives. It is found seven times in the two epistles. In 2:8, we see “a stone of stumbling” (a stumbling stone). Jesus had not come in the preconceived way that they thought he should. He was a stumbling stone. It is interesting to me as we think about stones, Peter seems to be talking about stones and precious stones. In His first mention of the Church, Jesus said, “upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18) It is a beautiful thing to think about Christians as living stones. I appreciate the thought that we have been quarried or mined out of the pit of sin, and we have been cemented by grace into the building of God — a dwelling, as Ephesians states — an “habitation of God through the Spirit.” This is something to be excited about.

The picture here, of Christianity, is not of an individual all out freelancing on his own is it? It is of a “building fitly framed together.” (Ephesians 2:21) Suppose that a brick would refuse to be placed into a wall, or suppose a stone would refuse to be placed into the wall and he would maintain his rights that he will stay out there in the brick yard. He would have value of course. However, his true value is found when he allows himself to be incorporated into the building of God. I think this says something against the individual movement of our day.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” (verses 9, 10) These verses tell us something of the dignity and honour of being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed it is a blessed privilege. Verse 1 tells us what the believer must shed. Verse 2 tells us what the believer must be fed. Verse 7 tells us about our great Head the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 9 tells us of the blessing

that we must spread. Do we know that Christians are advertisements? We are living advertisements of the reality of a living God. Did we know that? People look on and make a judgment of God, and develop an opinion of God because of His children. How important it is that we as children (those who have received the divine nature) are an image of the living God. Verses 9 and 10 tell us something of the dignity and honour of being a follower of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus gives dignity and a sense of worth and belonging to us, who were people that were once foolish, superficial and artificial. We belong to the people of God. We are a part of this great army of God. It is such a privilege and along with the privilege there is a responsibility.

The story is told many years ago, in the days of slavery that on every Christmas there was a certain plantation owner in Louisiana used to have a little party for his slaves. This was one day of the year when they were allowed to do some things, “kick up their heels” a little bit and there would be an old whiskey barrel there full of whiskey. He would pass out old cigars and he would have a banjo and a band to play some music and there was dancing and sinfulness and so on.

The plantation owner was strongly encouraging them in this. He noticed one slave would not be involved in this. He went over and told him, “here is your glass of whiskey and your cigar. Why don’t you get out there and dance with the rest of them?” He replied, “Oh no sir, I could never do that. My father was a man of great honour and a chief in the tribe back in Africa and his father was a man of great honour. We come from a people of nobility. We would never lower ourselves to this behaviour.” Along with these privileges, and being a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,” we are to be as God has made us people of nobility, not of our own works. It was because of the blood that was shed for us. It was precious blood and we are a people of nobility.

Verses 11–17 of this chapter give us at least eight commands that are addressed to the believer. All of us are aware that we cannot grow, and will not grow and mature in the Christian experience without submission and without obedience to the will of our head the Lord Jesus. Peter gives some specific commands and along with that, some motives for obedience. As we look at submission and obedi-

ence, chapter 2:11–17 is submission as a citizen. 2:18–25 is obedience and submission as a worker or as a slave. Chapter 3 continues with submission in our homes, marriage and so on in verses 1–7. Verses 8–17 would teach submission within the body.

Sometimes the word submission gets us a bit of a black eye. People do not like the word submission any more because it seems like something that is thwarting them or holding them down. It does not mean that at all. Submission is a free word. It brings freedom. What do I mean by that? Submission is simply a recognition of God’s authority in our lives. It does not hamper us, push us down and hold us under. Rather, it gives us a freedom when we sense our place in God’s Kingdom and our work in God’s Kingdom. The prodigal son demanded what he thought was freedom. He thought freedom meant selfish unrestrained living. We know what the prodigal son found. Selfish, unrestrained living does not bring freedom, instead it brings slavery. He was tired of that. He came to his senses, went home to his father, and came under his father’s rule and authority. He found freedom — freedom to grow. In that environment, when

he submitted to a will, there was a freedom to flourish and grow, and also a sense of freedom of conscience. What a blessing that is.

Peter gives three motives for submission to the Lord in these different areas. Motive one is found in verses 11 and 12. “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” This first motive that Peter gives for submission is for the sake of the lost. Do we know that people — the unsaved wicked men and women — are looking for an excuse to reject the Gospel? Do we ever wonder why the news media, whenever a religious figure falls into sin or trouble, how they broadcast it? It is quite easy to figure out. Unsaved people are looking for excuses to reject the Gospel message. When they see something like that they say, “Aha, I told you there was not anything to it anyway. So let us go on living our ungodly way, because those men who teach against it secretly would like to have it themselves.” They look

for excuses to reject the Gospel. Peter says if we will be a witness to them, we must live verse 12 a “conversation honest.” This word implies more of course than simply telling the truth. It means doing and living right. The word in the original carries with it, the idea of comeliness, or having an admirable or a beautiful life.

Let me tell you something that spoke to my heart. When I was not a Christian, my next older brother was a Christian and I was not. I was a rebellious young man living in sin. He witnessed to me at different times and I would reject it and go on. One time (we worked together) we were going to work early on a Monday morning. Suddenly a truck pulled out in front of us and stopped and we had to stop. This man got out and he was very angry. My brother was driving, and he came over to the driver’s door saying, “I ought to punch you in the nose pulling out in front of me like that.” My brother who was a Christian, and loved the Lord, was spoken to very roughly and very angrily. He got out and said, “let me out. I want to talk to you.” As he got out, he put his hand on his shoulder and spoke to this man saying, “If I pulled out in front of you, I certainly did not mean to. I am very sorry. I apologize.” The

man slowly simmered down, and down, and down. Finally he grasped my brother’s hand and said, “Let’s not, It’s late for work, that thing was just something that snapped in my head and I got so angry,” and he apologized. He was sorry. This was in my mind even though I rejected what my brother was saying. There was something admirable and beautiful about that. It was something that I knew did not come from the human blood that was flowing in him, because I knew how I was feeling. Peter calls that honest. “Having your conversation honest,” or admirable among the gentiles.

Our good works must match our good words. Why is this? Peter encourages us in that we have to bear witness to the lost, so that one day God might visit and save them. “The day of visitation” could mean that the day that Jesus Christ would come again. However, I would believe that it would rather mean that someday God would visit these sinners and save them by His grace. The same term is used in Luke 19:44, when Jesus wept over Jerusalem and lamented that in the day of His visitation, they ignored Him. I believe it is used in this way in verse 12. For the sake of the lost, we need to submit to the Lord God in every way.

The second motive that Peter gives is found in verse 13, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." We are representatives of Jesus Christ here on earth. It is our responsibility to advertise the virtues of the Christian life lived in obedience to the Lord God, "for the Lord's sake." In this context, it is used in reference to the government and so on. We need to try to cooperate with our government, pay our taxes, follow building codes and so on as much as we can, and when we cannot because of conscience's sake, I still think we need to respect the king's authority. An example of this was Daniel and his three friends, when the king's diet was an offense to them. They could not obey that. Do we see what they did? They went to them in a way that was not a challenge to the king. They went respectfully. It was not a brazen confrontation, "I am not going to do it." They went very respectfully and in a way that they implored the king's helper to give them a choice, and the king's helper did.

Several years ago there was a group in our community who was upset and uptight about a certain church and Christian School in the Midwest. They threw the pastor in jail for some

reason and they were uptight about this. These people gave a talk and wanted us to sign a petition, call the Senators and so on, about this thing. We talked, and discussed it a little bit. We felt that we simply did not want to get involved. There is a way of standing for truth, doing it in a respectful way, and doing it in a way that is not an affront to the government. We do not have to picket and so on, to do it.

This is interesting in the context that it is given. In the Roman empire at this time there were thousands and thousands of slaves. The slaves had no legal rights. They were only considered a possession. Some of these slaves had jobs. There were doctors who were slaves. They had many good skilled trades, but they were slaves. Into this setting of much slavery, came Christianity. Christianity came, and many of these slaves (in fact a good share of the early Church as I would have understood would have come from slavery background) came into the Church. The slaves heard and discovered that there was dignity. They felt a worth. They were children and people of God. They had a sense of self worth. The slave was loved of God.

I wish to quote a bit of historical interest which was a blessing

to me. "It was quite possible in the early days that the slave should be a president or the leader of a congregation and the master could be a member of it. This was a new and revolutionary situation. It had its glories, but it also had its dangers. Suppose both master and servant became a Christian. There arose a danger that the slave might presume upon the new relationship and make an excuse for shirking his work and assuming that since both he and his master were both Christians, he could get away with anything. But, Peter is quite clear the relationship between Christian and Christian does not abolish the relationship between man and man. The Christian must indeed be a better workman than anyone else. He is working for the glory of God. His Christianity is not a reason for claiming an exemption from rule, from government, from discipline. It should bring him under severe self-discipline and make him more conscientious, a better worker, and a better citizen than others."

"There was also the danger that the new dignity that Christianity brought him should make the slave rebel and seek to abolish slavery all together. Some Bible students are puzzled that no New Testament writer

ever pleads for the abolition of slavery or even says in so many words that it is wrong. The reason is simple. To have an encouraged slave to rise against their masters would have been the way to speedy disaster. There had been such revolts before and they had been quickly and savagely crushed. In any event such teaching would have merely gained for Christianity the reputation of being a revolutionary, subversive religion. There are some things that cannot happen quickly. There are some situations into which the leaven has to work and in which haste is the surest way to delay the desired end. The leaven of Christianity had to work in the world for many generations, before the abolition of slavery became a practical possibility.

"Peter was concerned that Christian slaves should demonstrate to the world that Christianity did not make them dissatisfied, disgruntled rebels, but rather, workmen and citizens who had found a new inspiration toward doing an honest day's work and being a good citizen." This was very interesting to me. The second motive which Peter gave was that we obey and submit and come under subjection for the Lord's sake.

The third motive for obedience

is found in verse 20. It is for our own sake. "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." There may have been slaves who had been wronged. Our natural tendency is to fight back, lash out, get revenge, or hate. Resentment is a natural tendency when we are wronged. This is never right. We never have a right. This is where problems come in among people — among brothers and sisters. We feel that our rights have been violated. We respond and lash out, but it is never right to do wrong. It is never right to respond wrongfully. It is never right, no matter how badly we have been treated, to respond carnally. No one can make us do that. Sometimes we say, "He or she made me do it." No, they did not. We choose to do that ourselves. We never lash out. Instead we submit to the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we submit to His pattern and example we become more like Him. It is for our own sake that we submit to Him in obedience. It will become a growing experience. We sing the song sometimes, "How Beautiful to Walk in the Steps of the Saviour. Stepping in the Light. . . Led in

Paths of light."

There were some deacons many years ago who wished to have D. L. Moody to come into their church and to their city to lead in a tent revival. There were two deacons who did not want him there. They did not like his style nor his way about him. So, they very emphatically cast their vote for someone else. The other deacons gently said, "The majority of us here would feel this way. We would like to have D. L. Moody here for this revival crusade." One of the others sneered a bit and said, "You would think, the way you would talk, that you would think that badly as you want him, that D. L. Moody would have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit." This so shocked the rest of the deacons that no one spoke for a while. One answered this way. "We are not saying that D. L. Moody by any means has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit. It does appear to us that the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on D. L. Moody. That is why the Holy Spirit can use him."

As I considered this subject of Cultivating Christian Vitality, there was a song that came to my mind, "We never can feel, the delights of his love, until all on the altar we lay." If we want to grow, if we want to glow and be an advertisement, and an effec-

tive witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, it must come to that. Everything must be laid on the

altar. Between the Lord God and us, there must be no known sin.

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From the Previous Issue:

What is Lost When Youth Go Wrong?

From a sermon by the late Daniel Good
Sunday, April 18, 2004

Orchardville Mennonite Church

The Need For Purity

From a message by Brother Wayne Hostetler
Berea Mennonite Fellowship
Rutherford, TN

Given at

Tennessee/Kentucky Life Conference Meetings May, 2004

Held At

Mt. Carmel Bible Fellowship
Flemingsburg, KY

Book Reprint (Continued)
One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 45.

Minor Prophets.

1.

Name: Hosea

Number of Chapters: 14

Identity: Son of Beeri

Time of Prophecy: In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah and Jeroboam II, king of Israel

Theme of Prophecy: God's judgments against the people. — Reproof for sin. — A promise of God's mercy.

Notice of New Testament Writers: Matthew 2:15; 9:13 12:7; Luke 23:30; Romans 9:25, 26; 1 Corinthians 15:4; 1 Peter 2:10; Revelation 6:16

Remarks: Charges against Israel: idolatry, pride, treachery, hypocrisy, impiety, murder, whoredom. Plenty of burnt offerings in Israel, but little knowledge of God (6:6).

2.

Name: Joel

Number of Chapters: 3

Identity: Son of Pethnel

Time of Prophecy: Not definitely known.

Theme of Prophecy: God's terrible judgment. — The blessings of Zion

Notice of New Testament Writers: Acts 2:16–21

Remarks: The sinner may well say, "Alas for the day!" For the hosts of God, the consolation is "Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice."

3.

Name: Amos

Number of Chapters: 9

Identity: Among the herdsmen of Tekoa.

Time of Prophecy: In the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel.

Theme of Prophecy: God's judgment upon heathen nations. — Reproof for, and desolation of Israel. — Restoration of the tabernacle of David.

Notice of New Testament Writers: Acts 7:42, 43; 15:16

Remarks: Quotations worth remembering:

1. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?
2. Prepare to meet thy God.
3. Seek ye me and ye shall live.

4.

Name: Obadiah

Number of Chapters: 1

Identity:

Time of Prophecy: Not definitely known.

Theme of Prophecy: The destruction of Edom. — The prosperity of Zion.

Notice of New Testament Writers:

Remarks: “And the kingdom shall be the Lord’s” (verse 21). Complete victory.

5.

Name: Jonah

Number of Chapters: 4

Identity: Son of Amittai

Time of Prophecy: Not definitely known. Sometime before the restoration of the coast of Israel by Jeroboam II. (2 Kings 14:25)

Theme of Prophecy: Destruction of Nineveh.

Notice of New Testament Writers: Matthew 12:39–41; 16:4; Luke 11:29, 30

Remarks: Three things about the Ninevites appealed to the mercy of the Lord: they heard; they believed; they repented.

6.

Name: Micah

Number of Chapters: 7

Identity: The Morasthite

Time of Prophecy: In the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Theme of Prophecy: Judgment against Jacob for idolatry. — Restoration of Jacob. — The birth of Christ; victory of the Church.

Notice of New Testament Writers: Matthew 2:5, 6; 10:35, 36; Mark 13:12; Luke 12:53; John 7:42

Remarks: Four attributes of the Christian Church: glory, peace, kingdom, victory. Four attributes of the enemies of God: unkindness, igno-

rance, injustice, idolatry.

7.

Name: Nahum

Number of Chapters: 3

Identity: The Elkoshite

Time of Prophecy: Not definitely known

Theme of Prophecy: The majesty of God. — The ruin of Nineveh.

Notice of New Testament Writers:

Remarks: This book is a picture of Judgment. The more glorious the majesty on one side, the more intolerable the burden on the other side.

8.

Name: Habakkuk

Number of Chapters: 3

Identity:

Time of Prophecy: Not definitely known

Theme of Prophecy: The Chaldean invasion. — Judgment upon the Chaldeans. — The majesty of God.

Notice of New Testament Writers: Acts 13:40, 41; Romans 1:17

Remarks: 1st Chapter. — Vengeance upon a wicked people through the instrumentality of a people still more wicked. 2nd Chapter. — The just shall live by faith. The unjust destroyed for insatiableness, covetousness, cruelty, drunkenness, and idolatry. 3rd Chapter. — One of the grandest passages in the Bible.

9.

Name: Zephaniah

Number of Chapters: 3

Identity: Son of Cushi

Time of Prophecy: In the days of Josiah, king of Judah

Theme of Prophecy: God's judgment upon Judah and heathen nations. — The restoration of Israel.

Notice of New Testament Writers:

Remarks: 1st chapter. — Judgment upon Judah

2nd chapter. — Judgment upon the heathen world

3rd chapter. — Salvation for the faithful

10.

Name: Haggai

Number of Chapters: 2

Identity:

Time of Prophecy: In the days of Darius, king of Persia

Theme of Prophecy: Building of the Temple.

Notice of New Testament Writers:

Remarks: The Jews were reprov'd for their lack of zeal in building the Temple.

Our zeal should be to keep our bodies as fit temples for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

11.

Name: Zechariah

Number of Chapters: 14

Identity: Son of Berechiah

Time of Prophecy: In the days of Darius, king of Persia

Theme of Prophecy: Visions of four horns, four carpenters, and four chariots. — Redemption of Zion. — Destruction, repentance, restoration of Jerusalem.

Notice of New Testament Writers: Matthew 21:5; 26:31; 27:6–10; Luke 19:38; John 12:15; 19:37

Remarks: The priests were reprov'd, not because they fasted, but because of improper motives in fasting (7:5). “Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.” The offices of Christ are clearly foreshadowed in this book.

12.

Name: Malachi

Number of Chapters: 4

Identity:

Time of Prophecy: Not definitely known

Theme of Prophecy: Wickedness of Israel. — Work of John the Baptist and of Christ. — Judgment upon the wicked and promises to the penitent.

Notice of New Testament Writers: Matthew 17:1–13; Mark 1:2; 9:10, 11; Luke 1:17; Romans 9:13

Remarks: “Will a man rob God?” The actions of a sinful world say “yes.” This book contains references to the Jews, representing the Old Dispensation, to Christ of the New Dispensation, and to John the Baptist,

the connecting link between the Old and New.

1. Who was the earliest among the prophets of Israel?
2. Who was the first to prophecy after the captivity?
3. What prophet is closely connected with Zerubbabel?
4. Were all the prophets priests? If not, which ones?
5. What is meant by the term "minor prophets?"

LESSON 46.

Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled.

Fulfillment recorded in profane history.

NOTE. — The downfall of the following nations named was prophesied by a number of prophets. For the sake of brevity but one reference is given with each prophecy.

- a. Babylon. — Isaiah 13.
- b. Tyre. — Isaiah 23.
- c. Assyria. — Isaiah 10.
- d. Ethiopia. — Isaiah 20.
- e. Egypt. — Isaiah 20.
- f. Moab. — Amos 2.
- g. Ammon. — Amos 1.
- h. Nineveh. — Nahum. 3.
- i. Edom. — Amos 1.

Fulfillment recorded in the Old Testament.

NOTE. — We give below, a list of those prophecies only which are clearly shown by the Scriptures to have been fulfilled, leaving to the student the further investigation of prophecies the fulfillment of which are not so clearly shown. For the sake of brevity, but two references are give with each prophecy. The first gives the prophecy; the second, its fulfillment.

- I. Antediluvian age.
 1. Destruction of man in the flood. — Genesis 6:3,7; Genesis 7.
- II. Patriarchal age.
 1. Abraham to be made a great nation. — Genesis 12:2.
 2. Promise renewed to Isaac. — Genesis 26:3.

3. Promise renewed to Jacob. — Genesis 28:13, 14. Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.
4. Ishmael a wild man. — Genesis 16:12; Genesis 21:20.
5. Ishmael to dwell in the presence of all his brethren. — Genesis 16:12; Genesis 25:18.
6. Destruction of Sodom. — Genesis 18; Genesis 19.
7. Esau to serve Jacob. — Genesis 25:23; 2 Samuel 8:14.
8. Joseph to rule over his brethren. — Genesis 37:5–11; Genesis 46.
9. Restoration of Pharaoh's chief butler, and death of his chief baker. — Genesis 40:5–19; Genesis 40:20–22.
10. Seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. — Genesis 41:29–32; Genesis 41:47–57.

III. The children of Israel.

1. Their deliverance. — Exodus 3:7, 8; Exodus 12:31–36.
2. Egypt smitten with wonders. — Exodus 3:20; Deuteronomy 6:22.
3. Israelites to perish in the wilderness. — Numbers 32:11, 12; Numbers 32:12, 13.
4. The birth and mission of Samson. — Judges 13:5, 24; 16:30.
5. Death of Eli's sons. — 1 Samuel 2:34; 1 Samuel 4:11.
6. Raising up of a faithful priest. — 1 Samuel 2:35; 1 Kings 2:27, 35.
7. Downfall of Saul. — 1 Samuel 15:23; 1 Samuel 31:4–6.
8. Choosing of Saul's successor. — 1 Samuel 13:14; 1 Samuel 16:13.
9. David's humiliation. — 2 Samuel 12:11, 12; 2 Samuel 16:22.
10. Solomon to build the Temple. — 1 Kings 5:5; 1 Kings 6.
11. Revolt of the ten tribes. — 1 Kings 11:29–35; 1 Kings 12:16.
12. Birth of Josiah, and burning of men's bones upon the ruins of Jeroboam's altar. — 1 Kings 13:2; 2 Kings 23:15, 16.
13. Drought and famine in Samaria. — 1 Kings 17:1; 1 Kings 18:1.
14. Deliverance of Syrians into the hands of Ahab. — 1 Kings 20:13, 28; 1 Kings 20:20, 29.

15. Death of Ahab and Jezebel. — 1 Kings 21:19; 23; 1 Kings 22:38; 2 Kings 9:36.
 16. Incredible plenty in the midst of famine in Samaria. — 2 Kings 7:1; 2 Kings 7:18, 19.
 17. Death of Ahaziah. — 2 Kings 1:4; 2 Kings 1:17.
 18. Three victories over the Syrians. — 2 Kings 13:19; 2 Kings 13:25.
 19. Destruction of Sennacherib's army. — 2 Kings 19:20–34; 2 Kings 19:35–37.
 20. Destruction of Jerusalem. — 2 Kings 29:15–19; 2 Kings 25:9.
 21. Capture of Babylon by the Medes. — Isaiah 13:17, 18; Daniel 5:28, 31.
 22. Siege of Jerusalem. — Jeremiah 21:3–6; 2 Kings 25:1–4.
 23. Capture of Zedekiah. — Jeremiah 21:7; 2 Kings 25:6.
 24. The seventy years captivity in Babylon. — Jeremiah 25:8–11; 2 Chronicles 36:21.
 25. Return from the captivity. — Jeremiah 25:12, 13; 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23.
 26. Nebuchadnezzar's strange disease. — Daniel 4:24–26; Daniel 4:28–33.
 27. Belshazzar's overthrow. — Daniel 5:10–28; Daniel 5:30, 31.
1. Explain Daniel's vision of the four beasts.
 2. Explain the reference, "A remnant shall be saved."
 3. What prophets contributed to the prophecies recorded in this lesson?
 4. What nations prophesied against in this lesson have been totally destroyed?
 5. What events of this lesson were prophesied by unnamed prophets?

Children's Book Reprint (Continued)

THE PENNY TRACT

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It was more than three years from the time when my story began, that the same two young ladies of whom I first spoke were

walking one fine summer's evening on the borders of the common on which Frank Downes' house was situated.

Since that period in which they were sitting in the arbor they had had many troubles, and were at the present time in deep mourning for their father. They were therefore not now, as formerly, disposed to laugh at everything they heard and saw, but were prepared, through the divine blessing on their afflictions, to receive better impressions. So they walked on till they came to Francis Downes' cottage. I have described the appearance of this place before its owner became a Christian; and I will now endeavor to picture it to my reader again, after that happy event had taken place. And first, the thatch, which had been faulty in many places, was neatly repaired, and the rags and paper taken out of the window, and in their places were whole and clean panes of glass. The garden, too, which had looked like a wilderness, was now neatly laid out, and abounded with common fruits and vegetables; the little wicket, which had formerly scarce held together, though fastened by wisps of straw, was repaired and standing upright, and the path which led from thence to the house door neatly laid with pebbles.

When the two ladies came up to the wicket and looked over it into the garden, they expressed some surprise at the neat and

thriving appearance of all about the house, and one said to the other, "Is not this the place whose wretched appearance we always remarked whenever we came this way?"

"Let us go in," replied the other, and inquire into this extraordinary amendment perhaps the house has changed its inhabitants."

Accordingly, the two young ladies went up to the house, and knocking at the door, it was presently opened by a decent-looking woman with one child in her arms, and another following her. The ladies looked at the cottager, and she at them for a few moments, before they recollected each other. At length one of the sisters said, "Surely you cannot be the person who some time ago came begging to our house with a child in your arms — a person to whom I gave a book?"

Indeed, indeed, ladies, I am," said the woman, smiling; "and I have reason to remember that day to the last hour of my life."

The woman then invited the young ladies to come into her neat kitchen, where, setting them each a chair, she told them what a wonderful work the book which they had sent her husband had, through the divine blessing, wrought in him, and how his heart had been changed, and his

conduct to her so much amended, that from being the most miserable of women, she had now become one of the happiest; “for ladies,” said she, “when I was so ill used by my husband, and saw my poor child pining* for want, I had no heart to set my house to rights, or mend and wash my clothes; and as to religion, I could not read, and knew nothing about it, nor was likely to know, for I never set my foot in a place of worship; and such was my ignorance, that when I laid my eldest boy in his grave, I was quite without comfort respecting him, and was ready almost to lay myself on the cold earth by his side. But now that it has pleased the Lord to change the heart of my husband, and to put it into his mind to teach me my duty to God, and to read from His precious word, I go about my work as it were with a new heart. I have even seen reason to rejoice in that which at one time brought me almost to despair — I mean the death of my little darling — inasmuch as I am now convinced that all is ordered and directed by our heavenly Father for the good of His people.” “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans

* Wasting away.

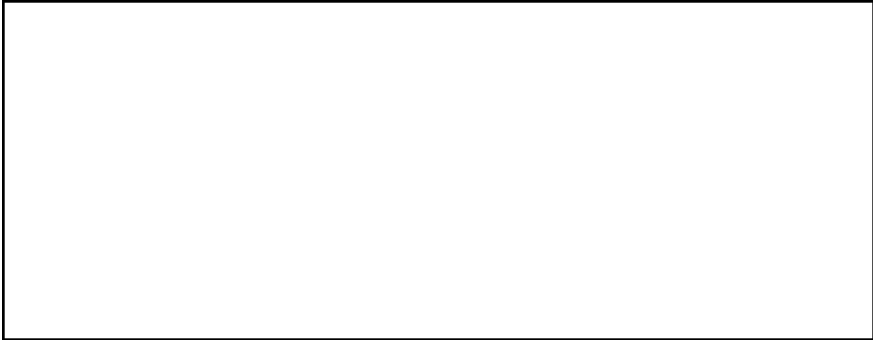
8:28) I now know also that I have the assurance of seeing him again.

Here the woman burst into tears, but they were tears of joy; and as she wiped them away with her apron, she gave such a look to the ladies as spoke her feeling of the obligations she owed them.

I cannot describe what these ladies felt on this occasion, but they looked at each other, and one said to the other, “I now remember the words of that good old man who sold the tract to us, ‘Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days;’ but we can take no credit to ourselves on this occasion, we must give all the glory to God.” And turning towards the woman she said, “May we have the tract again to read for we ourselves see the need to know better the precious Word of God which can change lives.”

Now, I do not pretend to say that every one who gives away a Bible or tract, or other good book, will always be made so sensible as those ladies were of the good he has been allowed to bring to pass, and perhaps it would not be well for him if he were. Nevertheless, of this we are assured, that if we labor in disseminating the word of God and the principles of true reli-

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gion, our work will not be without effect; for it is written in the prophet Isaiah, chapter 55:10, 11 “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give

seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper the thing whereto I sent it.” ❀

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